

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for context-sensitive searching of fields of a data repository using multiple levels of term expansion, comprising:
 - receiving, from a user, a query containing at least one condition for searching at least one field of the data repository, wherein the at least one condition includes at least one base search term;
 - obtaining one or more parameters associated with the base search term;
 - obtaining a level of expansion based on the one or more parameters associated with the base search term;
 - obtaining, based at least in part on the level of expansion, one or more expanded search terms; and
 - modifying the query to contain one or more conditions based on the one or more expanded search terms.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more parameters associated with the base search term comprise a name of the at least one field.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more parameters associated with the base search term comprise a name of a table containing the at least one field.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein different one or more expanded search terms are obtained for the at least one base search term depending on the name of the at least one field.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more parameters associated with the base search term comprise a user-specified level of expansion.
6. A method for searching fields of a data repository using multiple levels of term expansion, comprising:
 - receiving, from a user, a query containing at least one condition for searching at least one field of the data repository, wherein the at least one condition includes at least one base search term;

obtaining a level of expansion associated with the base search term;
obtaining, based on the base search term and the associated level of expansion,
one or more expanded search terms; and
modifying the query to contain one or more conditions including the one or more
expanded search terms.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the base search term corresponds to an
instance data value of the at least one field.

8. The method of claim 6, further comprising providing an interface allowing a user
to specify the level of expansion associated with the base search term.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein obtaining one or more expanded search terms
comprises selecting a set of expanded search terms from a plurality of sets of
expanded search terms, each set corresponding to a different level of expansion.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the number of expanded search terms in each
set is dependent on the corresponding level of expansion.

11. A method for context-sensitive searching of fields of a data repository,
comprising:
receiving, from a user, a query containing at least one condition for searching at
least one field of the data repository, wherein the at least one condition includes at least
one base search term;
obtaining, based one or more parameters associated with the base search term,
one or more expanded search terms; and
modifying the query to contain one or more conditions based on the one or more
expanded search terms.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the one or more parameters associated with
the base search term comprise a name of the at least one field.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein different one or more expanded search terms are obtained for the at least one base search term depending on the name of the at least one field.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein the one or more parameters associated with the base search term comprise a name of a table containing the at least one field.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein the one or more parameters associated with the base search term comprise a level of expansion.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the level of expansion is dependent on one or more other ones of the one or more parameters.

17. A computer-readable medium containing a program for searching fields of a data repository using multiple levels of term expansion which, when executed, performs operations comprising:

providing a first interface allowing a user to build a query containing at least one condition for searching at least one field of the data repository, wherein the at least one condition includes at least one base search term;

providing a second interface allowing the user to specify expanded search terms to be associated with the at least one base search term; and

prior to executing the query, modifying the query to contain one or more conditions including the one or more specified expanded search terms.

18. The computer-readable medium of claim 17, wherein the second interface is accessible from the first interface.

19. The computer-readable medium of claim 17, wherein the second interface allows a user to specify different sets of expanded search terms associated with different levels of expansion.

20. The computer-readable medium of claim 19, wherein the different levels of expansion are determined, at least in part, based on one or more credentials of the user.

21. A data processing system, comprising:
a collection of data;
at least one expanded term repository; and
an executable component configured to receive a query containing at least one condition for searching the collection of data, obtain, based on at least one base search term included in the at least one condition and at least one parameter indicative of a context of the query, one or more expanded search terms contained in the at least one expanded term repository, and modify the query to contain one or more conditions based on the one or more expanded search terms.
22. The system of claim 20, wherein the collection of data is a relational database.
23. The system of claim 21, wherein the collection of data is a text document.
24. The system of claim 21, wherein the at least one expanded term repository comprises a single repository containing different sets of expanded search terms associated with the same base term.
25. The system of claim 24, wherein the at least one parameter indicative of a context of the query comprises one of a plurality of available expansion levels, each associated with one of the different sets of expanded search terms associated with the same base term.
26. The system of claim 21, wherein the at least one parameter indicative of a context of the query is indicative of a portion of the collection of data involved in the at least one condition.
27. The system of claim 26, wherein the at least one parameter indicative of a context of the query comprises a name of a table containing the at least one field.

28. A method of searching fields of a data repository using dynamic term expansion, comprising:

obtaining a query containing at least one condition for searching at least one field of the data repository, wherein the at least one condition includes at least one base search term;

identifying a set of expanded terms associated with the base search term;

generating a pointer to the identified set of expanded search terms; and

prior to executing the query, modifying the query to contain one or more conditions based on one or more expanded search terms retrieved using the pointer.

29. The method of claim 28, further comprising modifying the identified set of expanded search terms after generating the pointer.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein the pointer comprises a directory path to a database.